1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

000 461 333 335 which are not found usually in the people of India. He is not above manual labour, and even the Khasi clerk in the Government offices is quite ready to take his turn at the hoe in his potato garden. The men make excellent stonemasons and carpenters, and are ready to learn fancy carpentry and mechanical work. They are inveterate chewers of *supari* and the pan leaf (when they can get the latter), both men, women, and children; distances in the interior being often measured by the number of betel-nuts that are usually chewed on a journey. They are not addicted usually to the use of opium or other intoxicating drugs. They are, however, hard drinkers, and consume large quantities of spirit distilled from rice or millet. Rice beer is also manufactured; this is used not only as a beverage, but also for ceremonial purposes. Spirit drinking is confined more to the inhabitants of the high plateaux and to the people of the Wár country, the Bhoia and Lyngams being content to partake of rice beer. The Mikirs who inhabit what is known as the "Bhoi" country, lying to the north of the district, consume a good deal of opium, but it must be remembered that they reside in a malarious *terai* country, and that the use of opium, or some other prophylactic, is probably beneficial as a preventive of fever. The Khasis, like other people of Indo-Chinese origin, are much addicted to gambling. The people, and especially those who inhabit the Wár country, are fond of litigation. Col. Bivar remarks, "As regards truthfulness the people do not excel, for they rarely speak the truth unless to suit their own interests." Col. Bivar might have confined this observation to the people who live in the larger centres of population, or who have been much in contact with the denizens of the plains. The inhabitants of the far interior are, as a rule, simple and straightforward people, and are quite as truthful and honest as peasants one meets in other countries. My impression is that the Khasis are not less truthful certainly than other Indian communities. McCosh, writing in 1837, speaks well of the Khasis. The following is his opinion of them:—"They are a powerful, athletic race of men, rather below the middle size, with a manliness of gait and demeanour. They are fond of their mountains, and look down with contempt upon the degenerate race of the

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342 but for themselves. In all these cases the youngest daughter of the family who is known as the Ka Khadduh of the family must live in the old house and maintain the social and religious traditions of the family. In the village of Mawphlang we found that the houses of all the Ka Khaddubs like Ka Sadia, Ka Hosibon and others, and also the old house of the wife of U. Suburai, the myntri of the Mawphlang State, all belong to this 'U'-shaped type. This association of Ka Khaddubs and 'U' shaped huts suggests that this is the old type. The modern huts vary in their structure, some being like modern bungalows common now-a-days in Shillong.

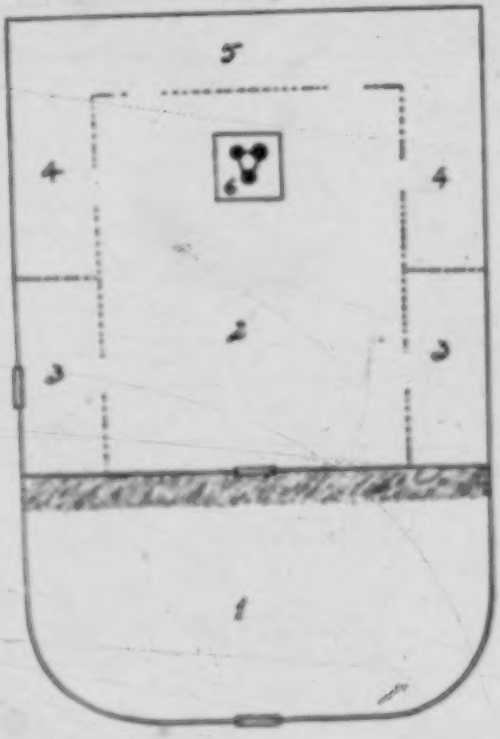
The old Khasi house, in general, can be described as follows :—

[343] [35] Generally there is a compound in front and a pigsty at one side, the whole site being enclosed by a fencing of reed and small plants or of wooden planks or some such material. The hut as observed from outside is elliptical in front and box-shaped behind (as seen in the diagram). It is 'U'-shaped in the ground plan. The roof of the hut is sloped on the two sides and spread out like a fan, in a semi-circle, in front.

• 333 342 The material used in the construction of the hut varies. In some of the old houses the walls were found to be made of blocks of stone with mud in the interstices serving the purpose of mortar. The roof had a bamboo frame covered with thatching grass. In other old huts the walls were not entirely made of stone blocks. In some we found the front portion made entirely of stone, the lower portions of the side and of the rear walls, up to a level of two to three feet, made of stone, the remaining portions being made of wooden planks or reeds covered with mud. In some modified huts again (either they were built later or the old huts were repaired) the entire rear wall except at the base and the upper portions of the sides were made of tinplates from used cans nailed to a frame. In some huts corrugated and galvanised iron sheets have been used. The material for the roof

12: Mukherjee et al. E-4, 5 (1940) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

also varies a good deal now-a-days, some being of corrugated galvanised iron sheets and others of flat tinplate sheets instead of



Ground plan

1.Ka Kyndur; 2. Ka Nympei;
3.Ka Kynrein; 4. Ka Jing Kyndong;
5.Ka Rumpei; 6. Ka Dypei.

thatching grass. In some modified houses we found a porch added in front of the main door of the hut.

Entering the hut by the main door, the interior can be divided into two compartments, the front one which is on the ground level and the inner compartment which has a wooden floor raised to a height of about four feet supported on pillars of stone.